

Strategies to reduce anxiety

Make your child's day predictable

Establish structures and routines throughout the day. In the morning, discuss the upcoming day's schedule with your child and any potential changes.

Prepare your child for upcoming activities and transitions

Let your child know what is happening next in your child's day, by saying things such as:

- When the timer rings, we will put away the toys and go for a bath.
- After 2 more turns, it will be time to put on our coat.
- In 5 minutes (then 3 minutes, 1 minute), we'll get ready for bed.

Give appropriate choices to share control

Offering simple choices empowers your child and helps them feel less anxious. For example:

- Would you like to wear your red pants or blue pants today?
- Would you like to play on the swing first or have your snack first?
- Would you like to hold my hand or walk beside me?

Follow through with the choices that your child has made. It confirms that your child's decision is important to you as well.

When your child is anxious or upset, speak simply and briefly

Get down to your child's level physically, by kneeling or sitting. Speak in a warm voice and use short phrases that can be repeated, such as:

- Stop and breathe
- Use your words



Provide limits in a clear, confident, and firm tone of voice.

Your child will feel more secure when they know there are boundaries. Limits will help them know the difference between what is safe/appropriate and what is not safe/inappropriate. Expectations should be positive and specific. Tell your child what to do rather than what not to do. For example:

- Use your inside voice when playing in the house
- Feet on the floor please

Provide frequent and genuine feedback of things your child is doing appropriately

Children do not know what they are doing appropriately unless you provide that feedback. Be specific, such, "You put your coat on" or "You worked hard to put your toys away".